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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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SUBJECT: "A Bit of Clothes Magic" - information from clothing specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

Not long ago...some government girls in Washington staged a show. They called it..."From Sad Rags to Glad Rags." As you'd expect...it was a revue of old clothes brought up to date. And the show proved to all who saw it...that there's no such thing as a tired old dress...as long as you have a fresh approach.

A bit of clothes magic at the hands of these Government Gerties wrought such transformations as...a handsome four-piece beach costume from an old evening dress...a practical button-down-the-front dress from a redingote...a wearable dress from one that was too tight across the hips by the addition of a modish peplum...a short summer coat-made battle jacket style- from a man's blue cotton shirt.

With clothing on the scarce list this year...many of you are anxious to put summer wardrobe slackers into active duty. And now's a good time to get out the fashion books...the scrap bag...and the button box and see what you can do about giving yesterday's duds that "new as tomorrow" look.

Here's a suggestion from clothing specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Try the garment on with the foundation garment and slip you'll wear with it... then stand in front of a full-length mirror and see what you need to do. Maybe just a change here and there will give the dress a new lease on life. Perhaps the only trouble is a droopy hem. Or the buttonholes may be worn...or waistline feels too long. Or the shoulder line is definitely 1937. Those are troubles that can usually be remedied.

-more-

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If the material is good...you may find that it's worth re-styling the dress completely...even if you have to redye the fabric because it's become faded or streaked...or because you've built your '45 summer wardrobe around another color scheme.

For best results in a redye..the clothing specialists advise removing the old color first...then redye with a good dye...and follow directions carefully.

If the remodeling job is an ambitious one...you'll do well to take the garment apart before you clean and dye it. You may find the fabric will look better if you turn it and use the wrong side out. Plan to cut around or hide spots that are weak...worn or stained.

In making a dress larger...the remodeling job is comparatively simple if you only need to let the seams out. As a rule...you can remove traces of stitching if you just press the material carefully with a damp cloth. (By the way...frequent pressing is one of the secrets of successful remodeling.)

In the case of the dress that's too small and there's no more seam room...you have a real challenge. Oftentimes it can be made into a more ample fit by the use of inserts. For example...you may use strips at the seam line to make tight sleeves large enough to fit comfortably. Or you may insert a panel in the dress that's too tight across the bust or hips. Sometimes...a skirt may be lengthened simply by setting inserts of contrasting material in a pleasing arrangement.

(A note of caution here. When you add trimming or combine materials...take care. Combine only colors you are sure will look well together. Be certain the trimming is in keeping with the design of the garment. Don't add too much.)

But do try your hand at converting sad rags to glad rags. Combine clever ideas with careful workmanship...and you too can work magic on your old clothes.

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